

Message Text

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12

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R 121459Z MAR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055112

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PT, PO, ID, AS

SUBJECT: INDONESIA AND PORTUGUESE TIMOR - AUSTRALIAN VIEW

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF MARCH 10 PASSED SUBSTANCE OF MESSAGE FROM NEWLY ACCREDITED AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TO JAKARTA (WOOLCOTT) CONVEYING HIS ASSESSMENT OF INDONESIAN INTENTIONS TOWARD PORTUGUESE TIMOR FOLLOWING HIS FIRST ROUND OF TALKS WITH GOI OFFICIALS.

2. AMBASSADOR WOOLCOTT BELIEVES THERE ARE CERTAIN HARD-LINERS IN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (HANKAM) WHO ARE SEEKING MILITARY SOLUTION TO TIMOR QUESTION. HE DOES NOT, HOWEVER, SEE THIS AS GOI POLICY. RATHER, HE FEELS THAT MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST TIMOR IS BUT ONE OF OPTIONS WHICH GOI HAS UNDER CONSIDERATION AND FOR WHICH CONTINGENCY PLANNING IS BEING UNDERTAKEN. AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT HE FOUND MOST INDONESIAN LEADERS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT SUHARTO HIMSELF, STRONGLY OPPOSED TO A MILITARY MOVE AGAINST TIMOR
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UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. AMBASSADOR BELIEVES SUHARTO

WILL MAINTAIN THIS POSITION UNLESS (A) SITUATION IN PORTUGAL TAKES SERIOUS TURN FOR THE WORSE, WITH LEFT-WING FORCES GAINING ASCENDENCY OR (B) SITUATION IN TIMOR ITSELF DETERIORATES SIGNIFICANTLY.

3. DISCUSSING AMBASSADOR'S ASSESSMENT, AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF COMMENTED THAT URGENCY OF TIMOR SITUATION SEEMS TO HAVE EASED SOMEWHAT. ONE OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, HE FELT, WAS STRONG AND BROADLY EXPRESSED ADVERSE AUSTRALIAN REACTION TO RECENT RUMORS OF IMPENDING INDONESIAN MILITARY TAKE-OVER. DEPT OFFICER AGREED WITH ASSESSMENT, SUGGESTED THAT ADDITIONAL FACTOR MAY HAVE BEEN ASSURANCES FROM LISBON, CONVEYED IN VARIOUS WAYS, THAT PORTUGUESE WERE NOT CONTEMPLATING AN EARLY MOVE TO CHANGE STATUS OF TIMOR.

4. AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF SAID AUSTRALIANS HAD WORD THAT ALI MURTOPO WAS MEETING WITH SENIOR PORTUGUESE OFFICIALS IN LONDON THIS WEEK (OR PERHAPS HAD JUST MET). WE CONFIRMED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD ALI WAS IN EUROPE FOR THIS PURPOSE ALTHOUGH WE WERE NOT SURE OF VENUE FOR MEETING. INGERSOLL

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